

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Dr. Kissinger by Colonel Carlson
of the Joint Staff

DATE: August 2, 1972

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Kissinger
General Haig
Commander Howe
Colonel Carlson
Colonel Everhard

The following are excerpts from the August 2, 1972 briefing:

Colonel Carlson: The weather is unfavorable over North Vietnam.

Dr. Kissinger: Are the new planes we are designing all-weather?

Colonel Carlson: Yes, they are all-weather.

Dr. Kissinger: If people don't like all-weather aircraft they had better vote for McGovern because if I have anything to do with it our aircraft in the future will all have an all-weather capability.

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Dr. Kissinger: What division is with the 2nd ARVN (in the area south of Danang)?

Colonel Carlson: It is the old Third.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, they are no good on defense. Let's see how good they are on offense. Does that mean they are no longer in the Hue perimeter?

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Colonel Carlson: No, they are to the south. One regiment is southwest of Hue, but the other two regiments are much farther to the south near the Que Son area.

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Colonel Carlson: There are no reports on the Cambodian operation.

Dr. Kissinger: That's because nothing is going on.

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Dr. Kissinger: I thought that 9,000 fresh NVA troops are being put into the delta.

Colonel Carlson: Yes, this is the enemy Fifth Division that's moved down there.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we handle the situation?

Colonel Carlson: That is the main reason the 21st Division was shifted back. If the enemy cuts Route 4 they would be interdicting the main artery to Saigon. It is a critical land route. The Seventh ARVN Division is there.

Dr. Kissinger: Where is the 21st?

Colonel Carlson: The 21st is at Cam Tho. In the next few days it should be redeployed into the area.

Dr. Kissinger: How about Thai Ninh? The enemy thinks there is only one regiment there.

Colonel Carlson: No, the Fifth ARVN Division is oriented in that area and there is more than one regiment.

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Dr. Kissinger: I thought you told me that they could not fly up there (referring to report on air strikes in North Vietnam).

Colonel Carlson: This was route reconnaissance and I will have a breakdown of it for you.

Dr. Kissinger: This must be the most unusual stretch of bad weather in the dry season.

Colonel Carlson: Yes, the bad weather north of 19° is the result of a front in the area.

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Colonel Carlson: We have some photo read-out that indicates the northeast rail line may be open. They are using spans on barges.

Dr. Kissinger: How could it be open? I thought we had dropped every span.

Colonel Carlson: They apparently have some by-passes. The photo read-out is all we have and it is tenuous.

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